House Education & the Workforce Committee
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ISSUE SUMMARY

H.R. 1 Improves Math & Science Education

Despite spending $358 million per year to train teachers in math and science, America ranks 19th out of 21 industrialized countries in 12th grade mathematics achievement and last in 12th grade advanced physics, according to a 1999 Heritage Foundation report. In the first Third International Math and Science Study test, in 1995, American fourth-graders ranked third in science and 12th in math out of 26 nations. Four years later, the nation's students fell to 19th in math and 18th in science out of a group of 38 nations.

Why do U.S. students continue to perform poorly in the areas of math and science? Three problems must be addressed -- too many teachers teaching out-of-field; too few students taking advanced coursework; and too few schools offering a challenging curriculum and textbooks. In fact, according to the Congressional Research Service, an estimated 31 percent of public secondary math teachers have neither an undergraduate nor graduate degree major or minor in the subject.

Today's high-tech economy requires an educated and skilled workforce, but our elementary and secondary education system is not meeting industry demand for qualified employees.

H.R. 1 establishes the Math and Science Partnership program to provide funds through competitive grants for states to work in conjunction with institutions of higher education in strengthening K-12 math and science education.

- More than 20 states have begun to form partnerships with colleges and universities to raise math and science standards for students, provide math and science training for teachers, and create innovative ways to reach underserved schools. President Bush's *No Child Left Behind* enhances these efforts by promoting these math and science education partnerships.

- States must award 15 percent of their math and science grants on a competitive basis to eligible partnerships for math and science programs.

- Partnerships will focus on strengthening the quality of math and science instruction in elementary and secondary schools.

- Recipients may use the funding to, for example, make math and science curricula more rigorous, improve math and science professional development, and attract math and science majors to teaching.

- H.R. 1 also requires states to design and implement annual math and reading tests for students in grades three through eight.